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Commercial Advertiser.



THE PACIFIC

Advertiser.

PUBLISHED WEEKLY BY
HENRY M. WHITNEY.

HONOLULU, HAWAIIAN ISLANDS, AUGUST 1, 1861.

SIX DOLLARS PER ANNUM
VOLUME NO. 3. WHOLE NO. 71.

Rural Sketches

Of the Hawaiian Islands.

A Trip to the Summit of Mauna Kea.

(Correspondence of the R. C. Advertiser.)

KONA, Hawaii, July 12, 1861.

So you like three-fold talk? Last year, and the year before, you had "a trip to Mauna Kea" from two different points of view, and as you don't care "bold enough," here goes for the third.

Our party started on Tuesday, the 2d instant, in two squads, one from Kailua, under the leadership of "The Captain," and consisting of the resolute "Mountain," who knows all the haunts of geese, hogs and wild bulls, and all the trails over "climbers and pathos;" and two visitors from Honolulu, whom I shall designate as "Sledge-hammer" and "Chips." The second squad started from Kailua, and went up the so-called "Judd Road," led by "The Sheriff," who was followed by "Types" from Honolulu, and last, though by no means least in his own opinion, the author of this veritable chronicle, known, for the nonce, by the sobriquet of "Steel-pen."

Going up the Judd Road, the early morning air was reviving, especially to "Types," who had long been a slave to official labors in your dusty, odoriferous metropolis. The road from the beach is straight up the mountain-side as a "bee-line," the engineer who planned it having apparently an insuperable objection to curved lines, no matter what hills or hollows intervened between him and the point aimed at. We also noticed that he had his own peculiar way of measuring distances, for starting from the beach, he called the starting point the first mile, and one mile from thence put down a mile-post, which he marked "2 miles." So, that on our journey, whenever we came to a mile-post, it was always necessary to subtract one mile from the record in order to get the true distance from the beach. The road, however, was in excellent condition, and long before noon, we had got well out of the thick wood which here belt the district of Kona, and launched at a spring of deliciously clear cold water. Once out of the woods, we came upon wide plains, dotted with koa and mamani trees, and surrounded for an hour to feast on the ripe rice strawberries that abounded. "Types" declared them to be of a superior flavor to those sold in Honolulu, though not generally so large.

Thus leisurely journeying along, we came in the afternoon to Haleiau, where "The Captain" and his party had pitched their tent, within half a mile of the late lava flow of February, 1859, and on the same spot where the numerous parties encamped who visited that grand spectacle. Though two years had elapsed since these solitudes were peopled with you metropolitans, the evidences of your taste were still apparent in the broken bottles and discarded oyster and sardine tins scattered about, while the ashes of once pleasant camp-fire—now cold and desolate—were seen in every direction. One permanent goal however, has resulted from your incursion—a fine crop of oats as sprung from the straw used in packing those sold in Honolulu, though not generally so large.

Finding water scarce and distant from the camp, we the next day packed up and started across the new pathos stream towards Mauna Kea. This stream presents the same appearance that it did in July, '59, with the one important exception that but little signs of fire are now to be found. Still occasionally, in passing some spots, the gasses obtrude upon one's olfactory, and a little steam is seen escaping from here and there a fissure. But Pele appears to have quite rested from her labors for the present, though there is no telling how soon she may recommence her task of land-splicing.

A little after moon-rise on the fourth, we got over the "climbers" (vide Webster, "vitreous matter which collects in furnaces where stone coal is used") and arrived upon the broad alluvial plain which stretches around the base of Mauna Kea. These were covered for miles with tall waving pili grass and *pua-tele* (a species of milk-weed, excellent feed for horses). This luxuriant growth would seem to argue a rich soil. About 4 o'clock, P. M., we arrived at a clump of mamani trees, near the foot or *debutement* of the Waiau gulch, and pitched out tent. Good feed for our animals and water in several gulches near by. The still gurglings—and everglorings—fourth was here duly celebrated, and I may mention that in our party of seven there were natives of half a dozen different States of the United States—including Louisiana—but we were all staunch Union men.

On the 5th—"The Mountain," after an arduous chase of five or six miles, and as many short of his ride, (the stock of which he broke, besides tearing his trousers,) killed a fine heifer (mind you, we had permission), and "Steel Pen" here records—with the proper degree of modesty—that, not aspiring to the distinction of hunting horned critters, he incomparably slewed a 300-pound boar, which had the temerity to come racing about. So our larder was well supplied with excellent beef and pork.

On Saturday, the 6th, under the portage of "The Captain," we made the ascent of Mauna Kea. Start from camp about seven o'clock, it was a hard pull for the miles ten thousand feet up hill to the region of snow, which we reached at half past eleven. About a mile from camp, we entered a growth of mamani and koa trees (bastard sandal-wood), and emerging from these a mile further on, came upon the barren sand and rocky hills that make up the more elevated portion of the mountain. Above the line of koa, wild cattle were seen in groups, but on catching sight of our party, quickly sped away. On an elevated bench, about a mile from the summit, we got fair views of the plains of Waimea, between two conical volcanic hills. We were above the clouds that overshadowed the plain, and looking down upon the white houses seen in the dim distance through the fleecy gaps, seemed like gazing in upon another world distinct from that on which we rode. Soon a fresh blob of cloud rolled in and shut us from the beautiful view, leaving only the tops of the Kohala mountains, like islands perching above the clouds. As we rode along upwards, every step feeling the air keener, our animals testifying to its rarity by their short breathing, when, after ascending an unusually steep inclivity, "The Sheriff," who was in advance, sang out—"Snow-o-o!" There it was, strong enough, the simoom, the wind, the cold, glistening like the tropicana a little band three or four feet square, rapidly melting away, but, for the time, real snow, nevertheless—

"Or like the snow-flake on the river,

A moment then they grow forever."

But we yet get some snow from the top, and ascending another step, came to a level plain, a mile or two in extent, out of which rose three or four sandy peaks from one to three hundred feet high, and plain and peaks,—with the exception of here and there patches where the snow had melted, were with the exception of the "Snow-o-o" of these peaks was the highest law on the Hawaiian Islands—14,700 (some say 15,000) feet above the level of the sea. We eagerly descended to taste the luxury of "home-made" snow and ice, and while "Sledge-hammer" and "Chips" were depending upon the snow-mill of winter, we roasting hot coffee in "Barber & Perkins" and "McCollgan & Campbell" for the purpose of reducing the temperature thereof, a most sudden and unprovoked cannonading a *poterieri*, caused them

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